



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

August 26, 2010

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the fact that the publication of our Federal Register Notice: "National Register of Historic Places: Pending Nominations and Other Actions" was delayed beyond our control to the point where the mandated 15 day public comment period ended after our required 45 day time frame to act on the nomination. If the 45<sup>th</sup> day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day. The nomination is technically adequate and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation, and thus, automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Edson Beall  
Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
Phone: 202-354-2255  
E-mail: [Edson\\_Beall@nps.gov](mailto:Edson_Beall@nps.gov)  
Web: [www.nps.gov/history/nr](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr)



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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Melrose

other names/site number Melrose Historic District (use for publication); Irish Row

### 2. Location

street & number Broad Brook & Melrose roads (See Inventory List [Item #7] for nos.) N/A not for publication

city or town East Windsor (Melrose) N/A vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06016

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

Signature of certifying official

Karen Senich, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Title

Date

4.30.10

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Jay Edson Beall

Date of Action

8.26.10

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- public – Local
- public – State
- public – Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 42           | 12              | Buildings    |
|              |                 | District     |
| 7            | 0               | Site         |
| 1            | 0               | Structure    |
|              |                 | Object       |
| 50           | 12              | <b>Total</b> |

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
6

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/ secondary structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing/  
storage/agricultural outbuilding/agricultural field

FUNERARY/cemetery

EDUCATION/schoolhouse/library

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/ secondary structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing/  
Storage/agricultural outbuilding/agricultural field

FUNERARY/cemetery

RECREATION & CULTURE/museum/library

INDUSTRY/vacant/waterworks

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English/Georgian

MID -19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY/Greek Revival

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENT/Bungalow

MODERN MOVEMENT/Ranch

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Stone

walls: Weatherboard  
aluminum/vinyl

roof: asphalt, metal

other: Brick

## Narrative Description

The Melrose Historic District encompasses a farming village in the northeast corner of East Windsor. Located on a relatively open, level plain just south of the border with the Town of Enfield, the 280-acre district runs along Melrose Road (SR 140), the principal highway, from just west of the intersection with Broad Brook Road (SR 191), almost to the border of the Town of Ellington on the east (see district map). Lots set aside for the district school and cemetery on Melrose Road, along with nearby open fields in the center of the village, are bordered by the 1870 railroad tracks that bisect the district from south to north.

Broad Brook, part of the Scantic River watershed, flows through Melrose and partially borders the southern edge of the district. Once a source for the village water company,<sup>1</sup> the brook also was diverted for a holding pond for a gin distillery in the southwest corner of the district. The elevated trolley trestle that once ran along the south side of Melrose Road is no longer extant.

The district contains 68 resources, of which 56 (82 percent) contribute to its historic architectural character. Most of the contributing resources are located on the four major contiguous historic farms that comprise the district. They include late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farmhouses, barns and other outbuildings, (several associated with the distillery), and associated agricultural fields, averaging about 27 acres in size.<sup>2</sup> Among the twentieth-century dwellings that contribute to the district are a 1917 bungalow, two farm workers' houses, and three Capes built after World War II. At that time the highway frontage of several farms was subdivided into small house lots, an arrangement that left most of the agricultural land still intact and readily visible from the public way. Non-contributing resources include two later Ranch-style houses, as well as barns and other outbuildings constructed after about 1960. Small vacant house lots in the district are not included in the resource count.

Historic farmhouses in the district, all wood-framed and mostly sheathed with clapboard, range in style from the Late Georgian and Colonial through Greek Revival and Italianate. Their associated contributing barns, which may be clustered near the houses or dispersed to the rear alongside agricultural fields, are all wood framed with gable roofs and vertical board siding. They include storage barns, used mainly for hay and tobacco, and animal shelters once used for horse stables or dairy cattle. More recent non-contributing barns may be sheathed with aluminum or galvanized siding and have coated steel roofing.

The earliest farmhouse in the district, the 1790 Captain Samuel Stiles House, has a Georgian center-hall plan with two internal chimneys (Inventory #29: Photograph 1). Once the centerpiece of a 70-acre farm, it has a five-bay façade that is detailed in the Georgian/Federal manner. The front door surround features a pediment embellished with denticulated rakes and bolection molding, which is supported by relatively narrow pilasters. Similar bolection molding with dentils is found in the frieze of the projecting windows caps on the first floor of the façade and at all windows in the end elevations. Windows generally contain 12-over-12 sash, except for those in the gable peaks, which have 9-over-6 sash. Secondary entrances in the main block include one located in the center of the west elevation, and two others in the outside bays of the east end. An open porch with round columns was added next to the rear ell about 1970. An extended barn just northwest of the house may be the oldest agricultural structure in the district (Inventory #30). Another Stiles house, a Second Empire dwelling built by John M. Stiles at the northwest corner of Broad Brook and Melrose roads, burned down in 1934. However, its associated remodeled outbuildings still stand at 127 Broad Brook Road (Inventory #s 20, 21)

It is likely that the cluster of three barns and two lean-to type sheds on the property on the west side of the Stiles House was once part of original Stiles farmstead (Inventory #s 24, 25, 26, 27, 28). All built about 1900, they are sited near the road on what is now a separate 26-acre lot just west of the Captain Stiles House. The

<sup>1</sup> There are remains of a ditch on the wooded property, but no structures were located.

<sup>2</sup> Six of these contributing resources are already listed on the National Register (Inventory #s 52, 53, 62, 63, 64, 65). See "William H. Thompson Farmstead," 2003.

largest outbuilding there, a two-story, wood-frame barn, is over 100 feet long and may once have been used for tobacco storage. Another long, narrow barn of this type (122' x 32') is found at the north end of Broad Brook Road (Inventory #23). Erected in 1950 on a 5-acre lot that was once part of the Stiles farm, it has a full basement.

The Eli Gowdy House at the intersection of Broad Brook and Melrose roads is the principal residence of a large working farm, of which about 80 acres are included in the district (Inventory #10; Photographs 2, 3). A late example of the Colonial/Federal style dating from about 1800, it has a center-chimney plan, a two-story gabled form, and, like most of the nineteenth-century houses in the district, it has an ashlar brownstone foundation above grade.<sup>3</sup> A two-car garage, sheathed with vertical boards, was added to the original kitchen ell in 1992.

Sometime during the 1830s, the five-bay facade of the main block was embellished with a classic trabeated Greek Revival-style door surround, which has a full entablature with pegged dentils, channeled pilasters, and multipaned sidelights and transom. The Gowdy house also has a secondary entrance centered in its north end elevation, which features a flat molded cornice board and channeled pilasters. The gabled roof pediment there is sheathed with flush boards and contains paired windows, capped with a shallow molded pediment. The gable pediment is omitted on the south end, where there is a small, one-story addition at grade.

Nearby houses are owned or occupied by the extended Gowdy-Grant family (all descendants of the first Eli Gowdy). They include the c. 1890 farmhouse and a small c. 1950 Quonset hut now used as a residence south of the main house on Broad Brook Road, and a small 1964 Ranch and a 1955 Cape on the north side of Melrose Road (Inventory #s 7, 8, 45, 46).

Associated outbuildings along the highway to the east of the Gowdy House include a large c. 1890 hay barn (88' x 38'), which has retained its original hay fork (Inventory #11; Photographs 4, 5). A 1947 dairy barn or cow house and a 1951 milking parlor are typical mid-twentieth-century additions. The concrete silo situated at its east end dates from 1957 (Inventory #12). A small, free standing c. 1880 barn, once used as a sugarhouse, is located just to the rear (Inventory #14; Photograph 5). The former Melrose railroad depot, moved here for use as a creamery, now stands on the west side of the farmyard (Inventory #17). A 1939 tobacco barn sits well back in the field to the south and is presently used for hay storage (Inventory #18).

A later Greek Revival farmhouse was built by William H. Thompson farther east on Melrose Road in 1850 (Inventory #62; Photograph 6). The almost square, pedimented main block (27' x 30') and a recessed kitchen wing with an open porch rest on a rubblestone foundation with brownstone veneer over brick above grade. Greek Revival features include flush-boarded gable pediments on the facade and wing, both of which have rectangular windows, broad paneled corner pilasters that match the design of the porch posts, and a wide continuous frieze board under the eaves. Both front doors open off the porch, one into the front parlor of the main block, the other into the kitchen wing.

Two other large barns are located at the Thompson Farm. There were several additions to the stable barn, erected in 1864, which is now 90 feet long (Inventory #63; Photograph 7). A milk room with an exterior brick chimney was added on its eastern end and it once incorporated a c. 1920 dairy barn, as shown by the concrete foundation remaining off the southwest corner. The Thompson tobacco storage and curing barn (82' x 20') to the rear, has a brick foundation and utilizes the standard vertical board siding that can be tilted for ventilation (Inventory #64). Tobacco was sorted on the section of the barn floor that was laid with brick.

The entire Thompson property was later owned by John B. Pease, the son of John M. Pease who built his Italianate-style farmhouse on his land to the east about 1860 (Inventory #67; Photograph 8). Although now aluminum sided, it has retained its important style features, such as the paired Italianate-style round-arched windows in the Greek Revival pedimented gables, and the open scroll-bracketed porches on either side of a

<sup>3</sup> The original style and date of construction is consistent with interior features, especially the delicate suspended curved staircase with a slim molded balustrade in the front hall and the separate beehive oven next to the keeping room fireplace.

projecting facade pavilion with a broad bay window. Another Pease house, a bungalow was erected just west of the Thompson farmhouse in 1917, was the first of several twentieth-century houses in the district (Inventory #51).

Two farm workers' houses are found at the Myers-Allen farm directly across the road from the Thompson-Pease farmstead (Inventory #s 53, 54; Photographs 9, 10). One was built on his site in 1947, shortly after Myers Nursery purchased the property; the other one was moved to here that same year. They stand near several large barns: two of which were built by the Allens in the late 1800s (Inventory #s 56, 57). Another barn to the rear was erected in 1947 (Inventory #59).

Other postwar houses soon followed at the western end of Melrose Road along the edges of the Gowdy-Grant and Stiles farms. A Colonial Revival Cape was erected on the site of the John M. Stiles house in 1949 (Inventory #43; Photograph 11). With its front porch sheltered under the extension of the front slope of the roof and the prominent gabled dormers, it has a bungalow appearance. The more common suburban Cape form, often with an attached garage, continued to be constructed here up through 1956 (Inventory #s 36, 40, 46; Photograph 12). The only Ranch-style houses added to this neighborhood were built in 1964 (Inventory #45; Photograph 12) and 1987 (Inventory #34). Most of the later postwar houses have aluminum or vinyl siding.

Several buildings and structures have survived at the gin distillery at the southwest corner of the district. The overseer's house, set well back but still visible from Broad Brook Road, is a vernacular, cross-gable Italianate duplex with full-height bay windows with pent roofs (Inventory #1). It overlooked the distillery in the wooded hollow below, which now contains a large wood-framed warehouse and the standing ruins of a brick boiler house (Inventory #s 3, 4 ; Photographs 13, 14). The latter resource is classified as contributing because most of the essential structure remains. Even though the roof sheathing is missing and the tops of the brick walls are crumbling, the iron framing for the gabled roof and monitor and the brick piers framing arched window openings are intact. Other distillery and office buildings have been torn down but their foundations remain. Nearby associated structures include the brownstone-lined canal (or sluice) that once carried water to wooden waterwheel from a man-made holding pond fed by Broad Brook (Inventory #6). Today water is piped to a c. 1930 shed-roofed, brick pumphouse (Inventory #5). Rebuilt about 1970, it serves several nearby properties.

The c. 1870 Melrose District School is a small Greek Revival building with pedimented gables and a brownstone foundation (Inventory #47; Photograph 15). A pedimented entrance porch with an entablature supported by fluted Doric columns, added about 1928, shelters a doorway with fluted pilasters. The smaller building on the site to the northeast, which was erected about the same time, once served as a kitchen (Inventory #48).

The Melrose Cemetery encompasses about 1.5 acres next to the railroad right-of-way (Inventory #49; Photograph 16). Brownstone, granite, and marble gravestones, arranged more or less in rows perpendicular to the highway, display distinctive features associated with different historic periods. They include the typical tombstone arched markers from the late 1700s with carved winged soul effigies, as well as obelisks and monuments from the later 1800s. More recent stones are mostly plain polished or honed granite.

A complete inventory of contributing and non-contributing buildings follows. Dates of construction, based on the tax assessor's field cards and/or the 1992 architectural survey inventory forms of East Windsor, may be modified in this document.

**Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources**

| Inv. #          | Address (Lot #)                   | Historic Name, Style or Type/Function  | C/NC | Photo # |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--|------|---------|
| BROAD BROOK RD. |                                   |  |      |         |
| 1.              | 86 (10.44.13)                     | Distillery Overseer's house, Italianate duplex, c. 1880  | C    |         |
| 2.              |                                   | garage or barn. c. 1980  | NC   |         |
| 3.              |                                   | distillery site at rear includes:  |      |         |
| 4.              |                                   | warehouse, c. 1880, wood with new metal roof   | C    | 13      |
| 5.              |                                   | brick boiler house, c. 1860, standing ruin   | C    | 14      |
| 6.              |                                   | brick pump house, c.1930; rebuilt c. 1970  | C    |         |
| 6.              |                                   | distillery pond and canal, c. 1860   | C    |         |
| 7.              | 112 (10.44.15C)                   | small Quonset hut (now residence), c. 1950   | C    |         |
| 8.              | 114 (10.44. 15B)                  | Victorian vernacular farmhouse, c. 1890  | C    |         |
| 9.              | 10.36.17 (21a)                    | field associated with 120 Broad Brook  | C    |         |
| 10              | 120 (10.44.15A)<br>5a (house lot) | Eli Gowdy House, Colonial/Federal, c. 1800;<br>Greek Revival remodeling, 1830s; garage addition<br>on rear ell, 1992 | C    | 2, 3    |
| 11.             | 10.44.14<br>(26 a).               | 19 <sup>th</sup> -century wood-framed barn with additions:<br>shed, 1995; cow stable, c. 1947; milking parlor, 1965  | C    | 4, 5    |
| 12              |                                   | concrete silo, 957   | C    |         |
| 13.             |                                   | small 19 <sup>th</sup> -c wood-framed barn/machine shop, c. 1890   | C    |         |
| 14.             |                                   | small 19 <sup>th</sup> -c. wood-framed barn/sugar house, c. 1860   | C    |         |
| 15.             |                                   | stall barn, aluminum siding and roof, c. 1965  | NC   |         |
| 16.             |                                   | cattle barn, aluminum roof/galvanized siding, c. 1975  | NC   |         |
| 17.             |                                   | railroad depot, c. 1870, moved here for creamery   | C    |         |
| 18.             |                                   | tobacco barn, now hay barn, 1939   | C    |         |
| 19.             | 10. 43A.1 (15a)                   | field associated with 120 Broad Brook Road   | C    |         |
|                 | 10.43.10A (.34a)                  | vacant lot @ NE corner with Melrose  |      |         |
| 20.             | 127                               | Stiles icehouse, Second Empire, c. 1875  | C    |         |
| 21.             |                                   | Stiles carriagehouse with attached horse barn  | C    |         |
| 22.             | 10.43.14 (33a)                    | field associated with 169 Melrose Road   | C    |         |
| 23              | 10. 43.15 (5a)                    | tobacco barn, c. 1950  | C    |         |
| MELROSE ROAD    |                                   |  |      |         |
| 24.             | 10.43.7 (26a)                     | barn, c. 1900  | C    |         |
| 25.             |                                   | barn, c. 1900  | C    |         |
| 26.             |                                   | barn, c. 1900  | C    |         |
| 27.             |                                   | leanto shed, c. 1900   | C    |         |
| 28.             |                                   | leanto shed, c. 1900   | C    |         |

## MELROSE ROAD (continued)

|     |                 |   |    |    |
|-----|-----------------|---|----|----|
| 29. | 169 (10.43.8)   | Captain Samuel Stiles House, Late Georgian Colonial, c. 1790            | C  | 1  |
| 30. |                 | barn, c. 1850   | C  |    |
| 31. |                 | shed, c. 1900   | C  |    |
| 32. |                 | shed, c. 1970   | NC |    |
| 33. |                 | shed, c. 2004   | NC |    |
| 34. | 175 (10. 43.9)  | Ranch, 1987   | NC |    |
| 35. |                 | shed, 2004  | NC |    |
|     | 10.43.9A        | rear lot, vacant  |    |    |
| 36. | 177 (10.43.10)  | Colonial Revival, 1952  | C  |    |
| 37. |                 | shed, 2000  | NC |    |
| 38. |                 | shed, 2000  | NC |    |
| 39. |                 | coop, 1952  | C  |    |
|     | 10.43.10A       | rear lot, vacant  |    |    |
| 40. | 181 (10.43.11)  | Cape, 1952, wing addition, 1960   | C  |    |
| 41. |                 | garage/shed, c. 1900  | C  |    |
| 42. |                 | shed, 2007  | C  |    |
| 43. | 183 (10.43.12)  | Colonial Revival Cape, 1949   | C  | 11 |
| 44. |                 | shed, 2003  | NC |    |
| 45. | 189 (10.43A.2)  | Ranch, 1964   | NC | 12 |
| 46. | 191 (10.43A.3)  | Cape, 1956  | C  | 12 |
| 47. | 195 (10.43.4,5) | Melrose District School, Greek Revival, c. 1850; portico added. c. 1928 | C  | 15 |
| 48. |                 | kitchen building, 1928  | C  |    |
|     | ---             | Railroad ROW  |    |    |
| 49. | 10.53.001       | Melrose Cemetery, established 1794                                      | C  | 16 |
| 50. | 10.52.6         | field associated with 216 Melrose Road                                  | C  |    |
| 51. | 215 (10.52.7)   | Seba & Laura Pease Bungalow, 1917                                       | C  |    |
| 52. |                 | garage, 1917  | C  |    |
| 53. | 216 (10.53.2)   | Myers Nursery worker's house, 1947                                      | C  | 9  |
| 54. | (30+a)          | Myers Nursery worker's house, c. 1900, moved to site, 1947              | C  | 10 |
| 55. |                 | garage, 1947  | C  |    |
| 56. |                 | shed, 1947  | C  |    |
| 57. |                 | barn, c. 1890   | C  | 10 |
| 58. |                 | barn, c. 1900 (96x33)   | C  |    |
| 59. |                 | barn, 1947 (82x30)  | C  |    |



MELROSE ROAD (continued)

|     |               |  |   |   |
|-----|---------------|--|---|---|
| 60. | 10.52.1       | field associated with 215, 219 Melrose Road                | C |   |
| 61. | 10.52.5       | field associated with 215, 219 Melrose Road                | C |   |
| 62. | 219 (10.76.7) | William H. Thompson House, Greek Revival, c. 1850          | C | 6 |
| 63. |               | barn and stables, 1864                                     | C | 7 |
| 64. |               | tobacco barn, 1864   | C |   |
| 65. |               | pump house, c. 1900  | C |   |
| 66. | 225 (10.76.1) | vernacular farmhouse, c. 1900<br>remodeled & addition 2003 | C |   |
| 67. | 227 (10.76.8) | John M. Pease House, Italianate, c. 1860                   | C | 8 |
| 68. |               | barn, c. 1860; restored 2008                               | C |   |

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**Period of Significance**

c. 1790 – 1957

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance, which is based on the dates of existing contributing resources or historical events in the district, encompasses the time frame of the development of the village of Melrose

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

## Statement of Significance

The Melrose Historic District encompasses a small, exceptionally well-preserved, nineteenth-century agrarian community, which is distinguished by the integrity of its resources. Buildings and land are combined in a fully integrated 200-year-old rural setting that illustrates the historical agricultural development of East Windsor, as well as some of the broader regional agrarian and ethnic history of the upper Connecticut River Valley (Criterion A). The district derives additional significance from the architectural quality of its well-preserved farmhouses in the Late Georgian, Colonial, Greek Revival and Italianate styles, the exceptional number of period barns and outbuildings of various types (Criterion C), and structures remaining from the village distillery.

## Historical Background and Significance

### Settlement

East Windsor was once part of Windsor, which was first settled by Europeans in 1633. Although Windsor proprietors used the land on the east side of the Connecticut River for farming and pasturage and established a shipping port at Warehouse Point, few people lived there, even on a temporary basis.<sup>4</sup> By 1680, however, there were enough permanent settlers to petition the General Court for their own parish, which was granted in 1694. When East Windsor was incorporated in 1768, the town bounds then included what later became the towns of Ellington (1786) and South Windsor (1845).

Melrose was once known as "Irish Row" for the Scots-Irish settlers who came here in the early 1700s.<sup>5</sup> Among them were Margaret Thompson, a widow with nine children, and members of the Harper family. Their descendants often intermarried with some of East Windsor's oldest families who took up hereditary proprietor's grants or purchased land in the village. The family dynasties they founded are recorded in the Melrose Cemetery, the final resting place for members of the Stiles, Gowdy, Allen, Thompson, and Pease families (Inventory #49). Although formally designated as the village graveyard in 1794, the earliest burials here date from 1776.

Captain Samuel Stiles (1758-1813) was a descendant of the first John Stiles who came to Connecticut with Sir Richard Saltonstall in 1635. Stiles, a Revolutionary War veteran, bought his property from Joseph Harper, his wife's grandfather, and built his elegant Georgian farmhouse, the oldest surviving house in the district, in 1790 (Inventory #29). When Robert Gowdy purchased a farm in Melrose for his son, Eli Gowdy, in 1825, there were buildings on the property, which probably included the Colonial/Greek Revival farmhouse that still stands today on the only active farm in the district (Inventory #10). The extended Gowdy-Grant family, stewards of the land for generations, still own the property. The Alfred Allen House has not survived but his farming acreage on Melrose Road is still maintained by a modern nursery (Inventory #s 53-59).

William H. Thompson (1813-1901), fourth in the line of descent from Samuel Thompson, a proprietor who settled in the Ellington section of town, purchased his farm in Melrose and built his house after he married in 1836 (Inventory #62). Thompson, who eventually owned more than 300 acres worth about \$20,000, sold a strip of his land to the railroad for the right-of-way in 1870. An active civic leader, he maintained an office in his home when he served as first selectman and tax assessor in East Windsor, and he also was elected to the state legislature in 1861 and 1862. In 1900, having outlived his wife and son, Thompson sold his farm to his neighbor, John B. Pease, and lived in the Pease home (Inventory #67) until his death the following year. A founder and life-long member of the Congregational Church in Broad Brook, another village in East Windsor (now the town's civic center), Thompson was also buried in the Melrose Cemetery.

<sup>4</sup> The term "proprietors" refers to the initial groups of settlers that were granted land and established towns in Connecticut.

<sup>5</sup> During the reign of King James IV, the Scots were encouraged to colonize the Province of Ulster in Ireland, and many of them later emigrated to North America.

The Pease family were direct descendants of founders of Enfield. The first Pease in Melrose was John M., the father of John B., who was employed as laborer at the Alfred Allen farm, located across the street from the Thompsons in 1850. Another Pease home in the district was the 1917 bungalow built by John B.'s sisters, Laura and Seba (Inventory #51).

### Melrose Economy

Agriculture was the mainstay of East Windsor's economy for more than 200 years. Land in Melrose has been cultivated since the area was first laid out to East Windsor proprietors in the early 1700s. Over time the major crops on Melrose's historic farmsteads were grains, including rye and corn, potatoes, and hay. Field grown tobacco, first introduced in the Connecticut Colony in the 1600s, became a major cash crop here in the nineteenth century. Some cultivated fields were turned over to pasture when dairying was introduced around 1900 on several farms. Today, most of the agricultural land in the district is farmed by property owners or by leasees.

Cultivation and processing of tobacco is so labor intensive that by the mid 1800s tobacco growers like William Thompson hired Irish immigrants to work in the fields and curing sheds. After agricultural experiments in Windsor at the turn of the twentieth century showed that a finer tropical leaf could be grown, the cultivation of shade tobacco became commonplace, with 9000 acres under cloth in the upper Connecticut Valley by World War I. East Windsor Tobacco Growers, Inc., which was founded in 1918, eventually joined forces with the similar Connecticut Valley association, before disbanding in 1923. Although production has declined considerably in recent years, tobacco was still cultivated in Melrose at mid-century as shown by the construction of new tobacco barns in the district in 1939 and 1950 (Inventory #s 18, 23), and shade leaf is still grown for cigars in the district (Inventory #22).

Much of the rye grown in Melrose was processed in the local gin distillery, established in 1860 by the Gowdy family. An ambitious building program, which eventually included a steam-powered boiler house, a warehouse, an office building, and the overseer's house (Inventory #s 4, 5, 1), was initiated by a family partnership, consisting of Eli Gowdy, his son, Colonel Francis Gowdy, and John Morton Stiles, his son-in-law (1818-1886). One of the oldest of the the seven hystooric distilleries in East Wndsor,<sup>6</sup> it operated until the end of the Civil War, when it was restructured by Colonel Gowdy as a sole proprietorship and continued in business until 1905.<sup>7</sup> Like many of the more prosperous late nineteenth-century farmers, Colonel Gowdy was elected to the General Assembly in 1870 and 1871.

### Village Development

The Gowdy family was also the driving force behind another entrepreneurial enterprise in the village. A deed recorded in the East Windsor land records in 1850 affirms that Eli Gowdy, Alfred Allen, William H. Thompson, John Potwine, and John M. Stiles agreed to found the Melrose Water Company. A canal dug from Broad Brook passed through Thompson's land and ran under what is now East Road to a wheel-driven pumphouse on Allen's land. Although nothing material remains of this enterprise, at its height the company provided running water for ten village farms. More recently, water pumped from the former distillery pond supplies several houses on the Gowdy-Grant farm (Inventory #5).

Other civic improvements included the Melrose District School. Erected about 1850, when East Windsor's public school system was organized into 12 districts, it remained open until 1938 (Inventory #47). A public library in the building, which was founded in the 1930s, continued to serve the village until 1950. Fannie Thompson, a Melrose resident, donated funds to the library and may have paid for the renovations in 1928. And finally, as was the case in many rural communities, the village post office moved about depending upon who was appointed postmaster. When the station agent was the postmaster in the late 1800s, the office was

<sup>6</sup> "Booze in Broad Brook," *Journal Inquirer*, 1/3/79, p.27 (Vernon: 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Yeast, a by-product of the distillery process, was shipped to the Fleishmann Company in New York, in ice-cooled wooden boxes. A metal stencil used to put the company's name and address on the boxes is in the possession of the present owners.

at the railroad depot. By 1920 it was located in the Samuel Stiles House, where it remained until the present owners bought the property in 1968 (Inventory #29).

### Melrose (1900 – 1960)

Connecticut's rural population declined rapidly in the late 1800s as people flocked to the cities and found jobs in industry. Upland farms were the first to be abandoned or sold off to newcomers, often European immigrants. By 1910 a quarter of the farm owners in the state were foreign born, with nearly half of them located in the more fertile Central Valley.<sup>8</sup> Melrose farmers survived by diversifying in response to market forces. In fact, dairying sustained the village economy when over production by tobacco syndicates depressed the market in the early decades of the century. Even though district farms changed hands after World War II, some land was purchased for new types of cultivation, as was the case with the acquisition of the former Allen farm by Myers Nursery in 1947. Much of the land in the district today is still used for agricultural purposes.

Milk production in the Melrose District began about 1900. Several old barns were remodeled as cow barns and milk rooms were added at the Thompson-Peases and the Gowdy-Grants (Inventory #s 62, 11); a new silo was erected at the latter farm in 1957 (Inventory #12). Using the state's trolley system for the shipment of agricultural products was such a common practice in rural areas, it is likely that both farms shipped their whole milk and the butter made at the Gowdy creamery (Inventory #17) in this manner. The trolley line between Rockville and Warehouse Point conveniently ran down Melrose Road, passing right by both farms.<sup>9</sup> The Grant's dairy business continued until 1990, when they began to raise beef heifers. They now are raising goats for the new West Indian market in Hartford and Springfield.

In addition to responding to new market opportunities, the Grants were among the first to employ a new coping strategy to save their family farm. Rather than give up farming or selling off the land for tract housing, as happened just east of the district, they elected to carve out small building lots for family houses on the roads bordering their farm, a method that allowed the continued use of most of their agricultural land. A similar process took place on the borders of the former Stiles farm, where lots were developed along the north side of Melrose Road, starting in 1949 with the Colonial Revival house that replaced the Stiles mansion that was destroyed by fire (Inventory #43).

New farmers in the district after World War II included Bernard and Florence Smigiel, second-generation Polish Americans who bought part of the Pease farm in 1957, property that included the Thompson House and the Pease bungalow (Inventory #s 62, 51). Bernard's father, Jan, had come from Poland in 1913 and grew tobacco in Suffield; Florence's father, Walter Hallack, was one the first Eastern Europeans to buy land in East Windsor. The Smigiels continued to farm the land, raising broad leaf tobacco, rye, and potatoes, which were shipped from Warehouse Point. Like many modern farmers today in the state, to make ends meet they were both employed outside the farm: Florence who had worked at the Colt factory in Hartford since 1940, continued on there after her marriage in 1955; her husband was a rural mail carrier. Today, the traditional crops are still grown on the Smigiel land, which is leased for agricultural use by their daughter, the present owner of the property (Inventory #s 60, 61)

### Architectural Significance

Much of the significance of the Melrose District lies in its well-preserved historic setting. Because of the stewardship of generations, nearly 200 years of an autonomous and self sustaining farming economy is still expressed in the arrangement of the district's farmsteads, the siting and type of outbuildings, and the precise layout and shape of the surrounding open fields, the latter elements virtually unchanged over time. This exceptional longevity is underscored by the purposeful remodeling of barns for new types of farming and the

<sup>8</sup> Cunningham, *Historic Preservation in Connecticut, Vol. 3. Central Valley....*, p.109.

<sup>9</sup> The importance of this type of transportation is underscored by the relatively costly construction of the trolley viaduct over the intersection at Broad Brook and Melrose roads.

stylistic progression of generally well-preserved farmhouses that embody the architectural timeline of the district.

The stylish Stiles and Gowdy farmhouses set the stage for the domestic architectural development in the district. These individually significant dwellings, which have strong colonial antecedents, exhibit exceptional craftsmanship and uncommon levels of style.<sup>10</sup> According to the comprehensive architectural survey of 1992, the Captain Samuel Stiles House is one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in East Windsor (Inventory #29; Photograph 1). It displays a level of sophistication rarely found in outlying rural communities, expressed here by the nicely proportioned, imposing main block with its center-hall plan, the understated, but clearly Georgian pedimented doorway, and the lavish use of bolection molding and delicate dentil work.

The architectural focus on a detailed main doorway set off by plain clapboarded walls, the essence of the so-called 'Connecticut Plain style,' is also the most compelling aspect of the Gowdy House (Inventory #10; Photographs 2, 3). Although cited by the survey as a c.1830 Colonial/Greek Revival-style house, the plan and features of the interior suggest an earlier Federal period Colonial, with an added Greek Revival doorway. Like the surround on the north end door, it features channeled pilasters, a unique architectural detail in East Windsor.

Even though the floor plans differ, these houses have so much else in common, they may be the work of the same housewright. Nearly identical in form and scale, they have the same size main block (nominally 40' x 30'), rear one-story ells, and employ similar materials. Of particular interest is the repetition of the centrally located secondary entrance in the left end elevations, a feature not easily accommodated in either a center-chimney or center-hall plan.

With its pedimented main block and kitchen wing, the William Thompson House, listed on the National Register in 2003, appears to be a more typical example of a Greek Revival farmhouse (Inventory #62). While the design utilizes the standard corner and frieze boards of this style to outline the pediment and clapboarded walls, instead of the more common side-hall plan with a Greek Revival entrance, here two relatively plain doors open off the porch of the wing.<sup>11</sup>

When the Italianate style first appeared in late antebellum period in East Windsor, it often retained design elements associated with the Greek Revival, as illustrated by the John M. Pease House of 1860, in which the cross gables are fully pedimented (Inventory #67). While concessions to the Italianate style in rural areas were often limited to round-arch gable windows, here the arched form is also repeated in the windows of the central polygonal bay. A fuller transition to the Italianate style is completed by the matching front porches, which feature elaborate scrollwork and turned posts.

## Conclusion

Melrose's long lived and prosperous farming economy has left an extraordinarily complete record on the open plain of the historic district. Generations of farmers have cultivated the soil and built upon the land, leaving clear evidence of their passage, a material culture easily interpreted by today's historians with little reference to published works. Not a static culture by any means, as evidenced by the embrace of new architectural styles or the continual improvements to farmsteads, but an entrepreneurial society that effectively adapted to the forces of modernization and the ever changing demands of the agrarian market place. Protected by a generational stewardship motivated by pride in their heritage, the Melrose Historic District remains as a viable microcosm of Connecticut's agricultural history.

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<sup>10</sup> Recent rear additions have not diminished the overall original integrity of these houses. However, in the case of the Gowdy-Grant House, where the garage addition is more visible, replacing or painting the sheathing is highly recommended, at least on the north elevation.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the development of this unusual plan see the National Register Inventory form for the property.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- Andrews, Gregory. "Architectural Survey of East Windsor." Connecticut Historical Commission, 1992.  
*Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County*. Chicago: J. H. Beers & Co., 1901.  
 Devito, Michael C. *East Windsor Through the Years*. East Windsor Historical Society, Inc., 1968.  
 Cunningham, Janice P. *Historic Preservation in Connecticut, Vol. 3, Central Valley: Historical and Architectural Overview and Management Guide*. Connecticut Historical Commission, 1995.  
 East Windsor Land Records.  
 Eliot, Mary A., comp. *Thompson Genealogy: The Descendants of William and Margaret Thomson*. New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse, & Taylor Co. (for the Thompson Family Association), 1915.  
 Federal Census, 1790-1880, 1900, 1910. MSS.  
 (The) *History of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut*. New York: Charles B. Norton, 1859.  
 Pease, Rev. David, comp. *A Geneological and Historical Record of the Descendents of John Pease, Sen., last of Enfield, Conn.* Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Company, 1869.  
 Stiles, Henry. *The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut, 1635-1891*. Hartford, Conn.: Case, Lockwood, and Brainard Company, 1891.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
 Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographic Data**

**Acreage of Property** 250  
 (30 acres already listed)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

|   |      |         |          |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 18   | 704590  | 4646240  | 3 | 18   | 705240  | 4646270  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 | 18   | 704690  | 4646260  | 4 | 18   | 705350  | 4646200  |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |   | Zone | Easting | Northing |

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The boundaries of the nominated district are shown on the attached map drawn to scale from East Windsor's Tax Assessor's Map 10 (aerial survey).

**Boundary Justification:** The boundaries were selected to encompass all the contiguous historic land and buildings associated with the development of the village of Melrose from c. 1790 to c. 1960. An area of modern residential tract development to the east and scattered modern houses to the west and south were excluded. The northern boundary is formed by the extent of agricultural fields that historically ran north to the border with the Town of Enfield and to Kreyssig Road.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jan Cunningham  
 Organization Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC date 11/2009  
 street & number 37 Orange Rd Telephone 860 347 4072  
 city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457  
 e-mail jcpres@sbcglobal.net

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation  
Sheet

Melrose Historic District

Hartford County, CT

Section number 10

Page 1

UTM References (continued)

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 5. 18 705700 4645720  | 6. 18 705700 4645630  |
| 7. 18 705520 4645340  | 8. 18 705070 4645220  |
| 9. 18 705040 4644910  | 10. 18 704810 4644910 |
| 11. 18 704600 4645120 | 12. 18 704530 4645650 |

Section number: Photo

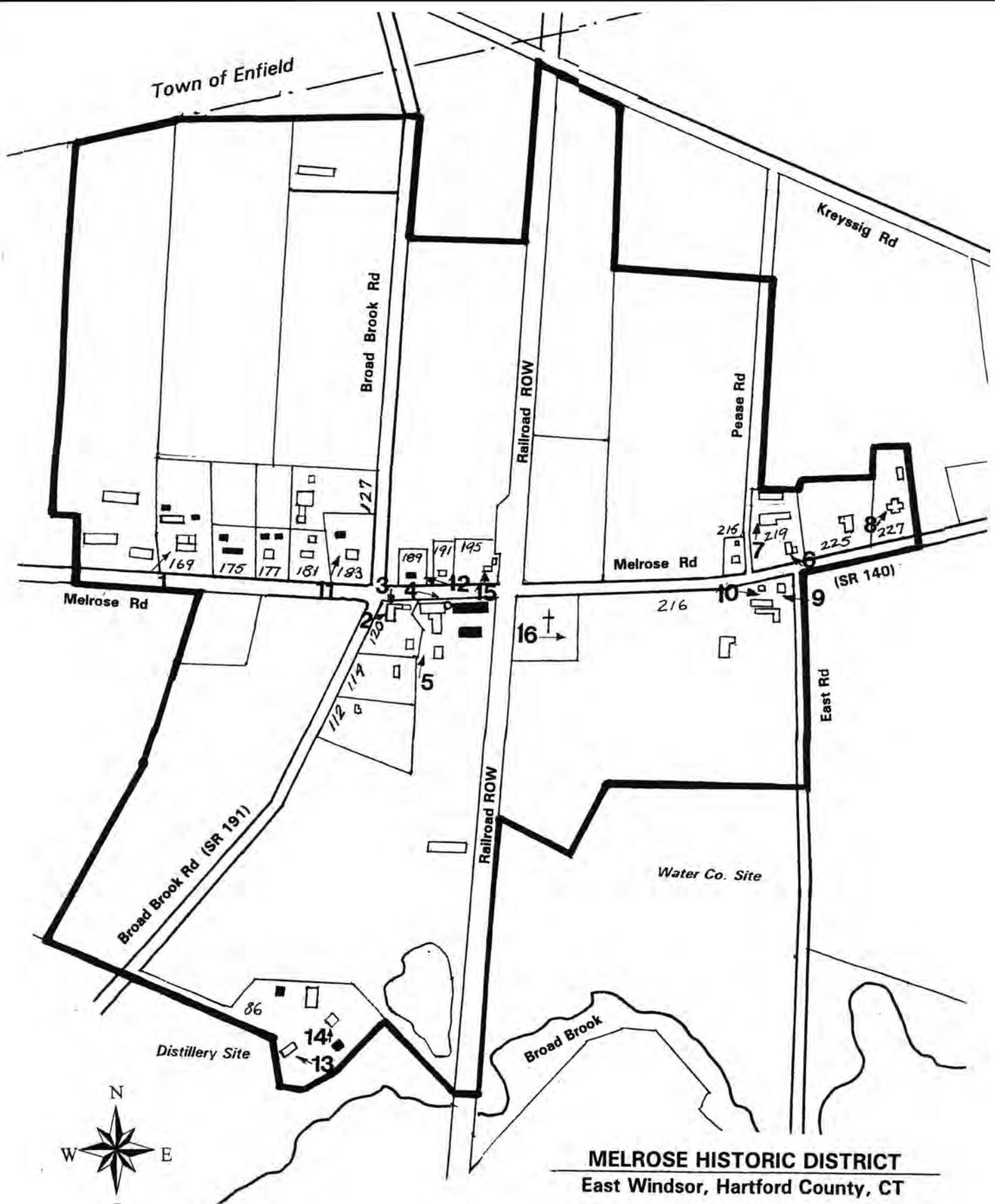
Page 1

List of Photographs

Name of Property: Melrose Historic District  
City or Vicinity: East Windsor  
County: Hartford State: CT  
Photographer: J. Cunningham  
Dates Photographed: 11/ 2008; 10/2009

1. Captain Samuel Stiles House, 169 Melrose Road, camera facing NE
2. Eli Gowdy House, 120 Broad Brook Road, camera facing NE
3. Eli Gowdy House, north elevation, camera facing S
4. Gowdy-Grant Barns and Silo, Melrose Road, camera facing SE
5. Gowdy-Grant barns from farmyard, camera facing N
6. William H. Thompson House, 219 Melrose Road, camera facing NW
7. Thompson Barn & Stables, camera facing NE
8. John M. Pease House, 227 Melrose Road, camera facing NE
9. Myers Nursery Houses, camera facing NW
10. Myers Nursery House & Barn, camera facing SE
11. 183 Melrose Road, camera facing NE
12. 189 & 191 Melrose Road (R-L), camera facing NW
13. Gowdy Distillery Warehouse, 86 Broad Brook Road, camera facing SW
14. Gowdy Distillery Boiler House, 86 Broad Brook Road, camera facing NW
15. Melrose District School, 195 Melrose Road, camera facing N
16. Melrose Cemetery, camera facing E





**MELROSE HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
 East Windsor, Hartford County, CT

- Contributing Resource
- Non-Contributing Resource

Approximate Scale: 1" = 500'  
 Bold Line: District Boundary  
 Numbered Arrows: Photograph Views

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Melrose  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Hartford

DATE RECEIVED: 7/12/10                      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/18/10  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/02/10                      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/26/10  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000577

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT      AUG 26 2010   DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



























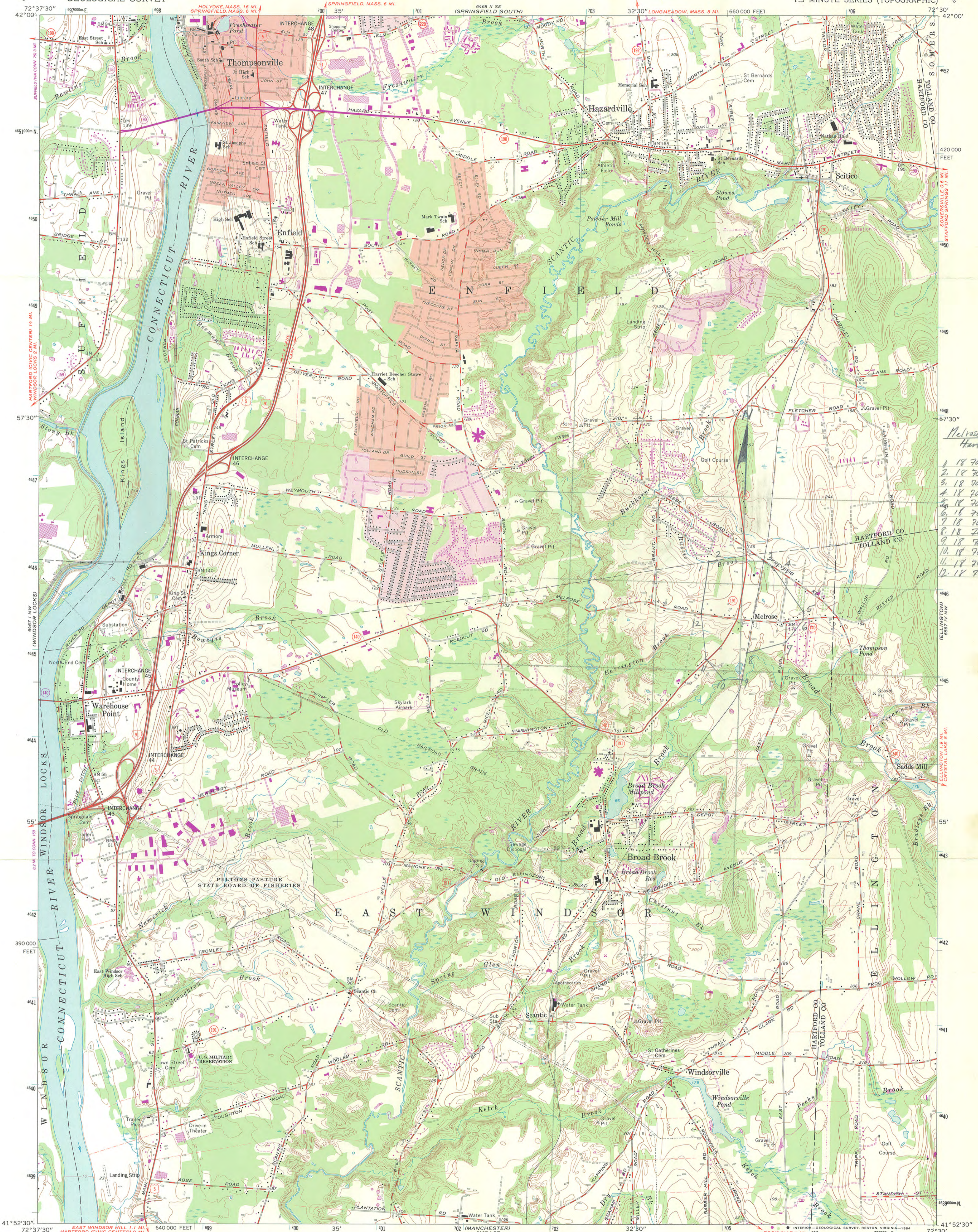












*Melrose Historic District  
Hartford City, CT*

|    |    |        |         |
|----|----|--------|---------|
| 1  | 18 | 704590 | 4646240 |
| 2  | 18 | 704690 | 4646260 |
| 3  | 18 | 705240 | 4646270 |
| 4  | 18 | 705350 | 4646200 |
| 5  | 18 | 705900 | 4645720 |
| 6  | 18 | 705900 | 4645650 |
| 7  | 18 | 705320 | 4645340 |
| 8  | 18 | 705070 | 4645280 |
| 9  | 18 | 705070 | 4644910 |
| 10 | 18 | 704810 | 4644910 |
| 11 | 18 | 704600 | 4645120 |
| 12 | 18 | 704530 | 4645650 |

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Revised in cooperation with Connecticut Highway Department  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1941. Topography by planimetric surveys 1942 and 1943  
Revised 1964

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Connecticut  
coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 5 meters south and  
38 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the  
National or State reservations shown on this map

UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24,000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC DATUM OF 1929

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
- Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
- Interstate Route ——— U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

CONNECTICUT  
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

BROAD BROOK, CONN.  
41072-H5-TF-024

1964  
PHOTOREVISED 1984  
DMA 6467 1 NE—SERIES 7816

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in cooperation  
with State of Connecticut agencies from aerial photographs taken  
1982 and other sources. This information not field checked  
Map edited 1984

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Arts  
Tourism  
Film  
History

One Constitution Plaza  
Second Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut  
06103

860.256.2800  
860.256.2811 (f)



MEMORANDUM

**TO: Roger Reed  
National Register of Historic Places**

**FROM: Stacey Vairo, National Register Coordinator**

**DATE: July 9, 2010**

**SUBJECT: Melrose Historic District, CT**

The following materials are submitted for nomination of the Melrose Historic District, East Windsor, Connecticut

to the National Register of Historic Places:

- National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- Photographs
- Original USGS maps
- Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
- Pieces of correspondence
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:**

- Please review
- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objections do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_ constitute a majority of property owners.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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www.cultureandtourism.org

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